

2006 Annual Fire Conference

April 3 - 4 , 2006

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
100 Bureau Drive Gaithersburg, MD 20899 USA

Meeting Summary

On April 3rd and 4th, 2006, the Fire Research Division of the Building and Fire Research Laboratory (BFRL) held its conference on fire research at the NIST campus in Gaithersburg. Approximately 100 participants from universities, government agencies, and the private sector heard more than 30 talks spanning a wide range of fire related topics given by the staff of BFRL and its grantees (A description of the Fire Grants Program and information on submitting proposals can be found at <http://www.bfrl.nist.gov/866/extramuralprogram.htm>). This event revived a tradition that began in 1977 under the auspices of the NBS Center for Fire Research. For its first six years, the Conference on Fire Research was held on an annual basis. After 1982, however, the event was sometimes held in conjunction with other fire and combustion meetings. Prior to April 3rd, the last conference on fire research was convened in 1999 as the International Conference on Fire Research and Engineering (ICFRE). ICFRE was cosponsored by both NIST and the Society for Fire Protection Engineers.

In his opening speech at the first conference, Dr. John Lyons, then Director of the Center for Fire Research (and later, NIST Director from 1990-1993), remarked that “We at NBS regard this work of our grantees as an integral part of our program, in fact an indispensable part.” In this spirit, the primary objectives we hoped to achieve by reviving the fire conference was to reinforce existing relationships between our internal research and our external fire research grants program and to establish new connections with prospective grantees and sponsors. In this respect, the conference was a big success. The discussions invoked by the presentations were plentiful and lively. Many continued well into Monday night as the participants enjoyed dinner at a local restaurant.

The theme of this year’s conference was “Roles of First Responders in Homeland Security.” After BFRL Director, Dr. James Hill, welcomed the conference attendees on Monday morning, an official from the Science and Technology Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Mr. Randall Griffin, gave the first keynote talk. Mr. Griffin summarized the DHS strategy for improving the preparedness of first responders. During the remainder of the day, the participants heard talks on performance standards for firefighting technologies, occupant egress from buildings, interactions between fire and structures, and developments in building codes and standards.

The keynote speaker for Tuesday’s sessions was Professor Fan from the State Key Laboratory of Fire Science, University of Science and Technology (China). Professor Fan gave an overview of the status of fire research in China. After that, BFRL staff and grantees gave talks on fire metrology and modeling, fires in the wildland-urban interface, materials flammability, and toxicity. During the break periods, the conference

participants had the opportunity to view more than twenty posters that were on display in the hallway outside of the lecture room for both days of the conference. These posters reviewed progress made in our four programmatic thrust areas: Fundamental Fire Science, Reduced Risk of Firespread, Advance Fire Service Technologies, and Research for Safety of Threatened Buildings. The conference program and some of the presentations can be viewed on the BFRL web site <http://www.bfrl.nist.gov/info/fireconf>.

Dr. William Grosshandler, Chief of BFRL's Fire Research Division has already made the decision to hold another Conference on Fire Research in 2007. The Conference Chairs will be Dr. Jiann Yang and Dr. Anthony Hamins.